

A Sketch,
from
The Landscape,
a Didactic Poem.

Addressed to R. P. Knight Esq.^r

with Notes, Illustrations, and a

P O S T S C R I P T .



L O N D O N ,

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Five money

A

SKETCH

FROM THE

LANDSCAPE.

BOLD KNIGHT, who falliest forth in rhymes
Against the monsters of the times,

From REPTON up to BROWN, that thick fot;
Well dost thou these enchanters maul,
Like any AMADIS DE GAUL,

ORLANDO, HUDIBRAS, or QUIXOTE.

Their *Pegasus* the Muses grant ye,
All in the shape of *Rosinante*;

(A steady beast, though full of fire.)*

Whilst thus with yon curst crew you grapple,
O give me leave to mount on *Dapple*,
And follow as your trusty 'Squire.

* Thus GRAY expresses the character of DRYDEN's poetry:

" Behold, where DRYDEN's less presumptuous car,

" Wide o'er the fields of glory bear

" Two couriers of ethereal race,

" With necks in thunder cloath'd and long resounding pace."

PROGRESS OF POESY.

If Metaphor from Med'cine please,*
 Let's call these modish whims Diseases :
 Your Muse shall find I'll still assist her.
 Such humours shall receive no quarter ;
 You shall prescribe --- I'll pound the mortar,
 Or mix ingredients for a glyster.

With perriwig and pompous air,
 You making all the people stare,
 About your nostrums crack and vapour ;
 While on the stage you take your stand,
 " Casting the water of the land,"
 I'll as your Merry Andrew caper.

Now we'll begin : --- Oh ! how I rage,
 To see the folly of this age !

* The opening of THE LANDSCAPE is very rich in medical metaphor.

" For as the Doctor's wig, and pomp of face,
 " Announce his knowledge of the patient's case,
 " And harmless drugs, roll'd in a gilded pill,
 " From Fancy get the pow'r to cure or kill ;
 " So our poor palliatives may chance t' acquire
 " Some fame or favour from their gay attire ;
 " And learn to kill or cure that strange disease,
 " Which gives deformity the pow'r to please ;
 " And shews poor Nature, shaven and defac'd,
 " To gratify the jaundic'd eye of taste."

LANDSCAPE, p. 1.

What connoisseur can bear it calmer?
 How cropt and shorn poor Nature looks!
 Smooth as our gracious S-v-----n's cooks,
 Bare as the sconce of MUIR and PALMER!*

How could these blockheads at her toilet †
 Shave such a charming head, and spoil it!
 The blund'ring boobies, how I hate 'em!
 Does not each mortal that furveys her,
 Cry, Shame upon their barb'rous razor,
 And bawl for bear's-grease and pomatum?

Another horrid imperfection ‡
 Is the bald Goddeſs's complexion.

* When Messrs. MUIR and PALMER were taken on board the vessel which was to conduct them upon their travels, it is said they immediately underwent the operation of the razor; having been rather too hot-headed in the cool air of Scotland, it was probably thought right to take this precaution before they reached the tropical latitudes.

† "T' improve, adorn, and polish they profess,
 "But shave the Goddeſs whom they came to dress."

LANDSCAPE, p. 16.

This shaving idea is very frequently repeated in THE LANDSCAPE, and it is hoped not unhappily imitated in THE SKETCH.

‡ The complaint of Nature's complexion occurs also very frequently; eternal green, everlasting green, tawdry green—are the epithets bestowed upon it; for example,

"But wrapt all o'er in everlasting green,
 "Make one dull, vapid, smooth, and tranquil scene."

Good judges all turn up their noses !
 She has the sickness got, I ween,
 By vulgar people christen'd Green,
 But by sage leeches term'd Chlorosis.

What's to be done? perhaps you'll say:---
 Why, drive those trimming knaves away,
 Who in a style so shameful treat her.
 Let me, by strong examples, urge ye;
 Shaving's no joke --- the Russian clergy,*
 To save their whiskers, pull'd down PETER.

With worse success, but equal ire,†
 Growling round G----E's kitchen fire,
 Strove the plump men of roasts and stews;
 But not a nob could here withstand
 The ruthless tonsor's rapid hand;
 Away went curls, and clubs, and queues!

* Of all the innovations and improvements planned by the unfortunate PETER the Third, the scheme of shaving the Clergy is supposed to be that which more immediately led to the revolution which placed the present illustrious Empress upon the throne of all the Russias. A few days after this event, all the world knows he died *rather suddenly*.

† Vide THE LOUSIAD, by PETER PINDAR, Esq.

Shave, then, no more, good friends, but friz
 The lovely locks round Nature's phiz,
 The weedy honours of her head;
 Let her not look so pale and sick;
 With fresh-plough'd fields, or walls of brick,*
 O "give her cheek a little red!"

Not e'en a mole should lose its bristles;
 (This is a figure, meaning thistles,
 Rank henbane, hemlock, nightshade, nettle,
 Such as old beldams, full of spite,
 Are said to cull, some pitch-dark night,
 To make a broth in *Hecate's* kettle.)

That man should walk, can Nature mean,
 On prim-roll'd gravel fring'd with green?†

* Should it be objected that my original does not support my recommendation of ploughed fields, it may be remarked that since "eternal green" is so often condemned, and the absence of trimmed hedges lamented, fresh ploughed land *must* be a beauty. The downfall of the ancient walls is complained of in various passages.

† "Prim gravel walks, through which we winding go,
 "In endless serpentine that nothing show."

No --- if I rightly understand her!
 'Midst brambles thick I'd rather chuse
 To trudge in dirt above my shoes,
 Than in such serpentine meander!

But, come, your nags I'd have you mount on,
 And scour away with speed to D-----n;*
 There from your dreams you'll quickly waken:
 To those sweet shades the Bard retires,
 And there the Muse his verse inspires,
 Or else he's cursedly mistaken.

However, first, attend my song,
 And learn how much you're in the wrong
 Upon the subject of approaches;
 Whether your road a foot-path be,
 Or made for folks of high degree,
 Who loll luxurious in their coaches.

* " Your poet, too, in one dear favour'd spot,
 " Shall shew your beauties are not quite forgot;
 " Protect from all the sacrilegious waste
 " Of false improvement, and pretended taste,
 " One tranquil vale; where oft, from care retir'd,
 " He courts the Muse, and thinks himself inspir'd." LANDSCAPE, p. 18.

MASON (poor man! he's fashion's slave)*

Says, Nature loves a gentle wave.

Such whimsies only make us smile:

He bids you mark the scudding hare---

The carter's careless track --- and where

The milkmaid trips from stile to stile.

The curious eye, at once, descries

These curves all differ but in size;

In kindred form they all agree:

All Nature's various children trace

This path of beauty, ease and grace.

This stuff is MASON's---now hear *me*.

To save your shins 'mongst rocks and briars,†

I'll give you leave to move in spires,

* I might here transcribe some lines from THE ENGLISH GARDEN, a Poem, which has had its admirers; but it is not worth while to *rescue from oblivion* any part of a performance, that, upon the demolition of the CAPABILITY system, must of course be consigned to the trunk-makers. A few thoughts from it are already *embalmed* in THE LANDSCAPE, as the attentive reader of both will easily discover. The spoils of the vanquished are certainly lawful prize; and where is the necessity of letting the world know the name of every paltry modern, who furnishes a feather to the plume of the conqueror's helmet.

† " Nature in all rejects the pedant's chain;
" Which, binding beauty in its waving line,
" Destroys the charm it vainly would define;

Else keep a straight and even line:*

For when you walk on ground that's level,
Pray, let me ask you, who the d---l
Would frisk about in serpentine?

When dinner calls, pray tell me who
Would ride about to see a view?

This point fam'd REPTON is not good in.
I think I scarcely need to tell ye,
Prospects ne'er fill the hungry belly,†
Sad substitutes for beef and pudding!

" For Nature still irregular and free,
" Acts not by lines, but gen'ral sympathy.
" The path that moves in even serpentine,
" Is still less nat'ral than the pointed line:
" When o'er the level lawn you chance to stray,
" Nature and taste direct the nearest way;
" But when you traverse rough uneven ground,
" Consult your ease and you will oft go round."

LANDSCAPE, p. 10.

* That Nature points out this right-lined approach upon occasions of emergency, is evident from the example of the Land-Crab, which, in its progress to the sea, where it goes annually to deposit its spawn, describes a straight line with such mathematical precision, as to go over all kinds of obstacles rather than deviate from it.

Vide EDWARDS'S HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COLONIES.

† " He" [the improver] "leads you many a tedious round,
" To shew th' extent of his employer's ground;
" Climbs o'er the hills, and to the vales descends;
" Then mounts again through lawn that never ends:

No --- in that case the man's a fool,
 Who does not draw his path by rule;
 I mean as straight as e'er you please.
 This our wise ancestors well knew,
 And still, the nearest way to shew,
 They mark'd it with two rows of trees.

O days of yore! I must regret ye,*
 When fine clipp'd yews, and mazes pretty,
 Gave ev'ry scene some marking features!
 Just as rich warts, and rubied pimples,
 Are far more picturesque than dimples,
 On cheeks and chins of human creatures.

" But why not rather, at the porter's gate,
 " Hang up a map of all my Lord's estate,
 " Than give his hungry visitors the pain
 " To wander o'er so many miles in vain."

LANDSCAPE, p. 11.

* " To Heav'n devoutly I've address'd my pray'r.—
 " Again the moss-grown terraces to raise,
 " And spread the labyrinth's perplexing maze;
 " Replace in even lines the ductile yew,
 " And plant again the ancient avenue.
 " Some features then, at least, we should obtain,
 " To mark this flat, insipid, waving plain;
 " Some vary'd tints and forms would intervene,
 " To break this uniform, eternal green."

LANDSCAPE, p. 23.

A little stiff, I'll fairly own,
 Are terraces, and steps of stone,
 And Cupids squirting in a basin:
 Yet these a thousand times I'd rather
 Than BROWN's eternal brush and lather,
 Though prais'd by WALPOLE and by MASON.*

Much I lament these works of taste!‡
 With ruthless, innovating waste
 Thou, daring BROWN, hast overthrown 'em;
 Yet will I try to teach this mad age,
 Though forc'd to violate the adage,
De mortuis nihil nisi bonum.

O BROWN, thy crime is that of HAM!†
 Nature's our universal dam:

* *Vide* WALPOLE'S ANECDOTES OF PAINTING, Vol. iv.—ENGLISH GARDEN.

‡ ——— “ See yon fantastic band,
 “ With charts, pedometers, and rules in hand,
 “ Advance triumphant, and alike lay waste
 “ The forms of nature, and the works of taste!”

LANDSCAPE, p. 16.

† *Vide* GENESIS, chap. ix. v. 22. et seq.

Sad dogs, thy fons, fuch feats to brag on!
 Thy meagre lawn can nothing hide;*
 Thou fhew'ft our mother's t'other fide,
 Expos'd to fhame with fcarce a rag on.

The modeft world exclaim, O fie!
 And, viewing KNIGHT and me, they cry,
 Some grace is left us, heav'n be thanked ---
 See SHEM and JAPHETH, pious pair,
 Good luck betide their duteous care,
 Who throw the poor old foul a blanket!

Death has mown thee --- his heavy paw
 Has fwept thee down his deep ha-ha,

- * " Hence, hence! thou haggard fiend, however call'd,
- " Thin, meagre genius of the bare and bald;
- " Thy spade and mattock here at once lay down,
- " And follow to the tomb thy fav'rite BROWN:
- " Thy fav'rite BROWN, whose innovating hand
- " First dealt thy curses o'er this fertile land;
- " First taught the walk in formal spires to move,
- " And from their haunts the fecret Dryads drove."

LANDSCAPE, p. 17.

Thou great defacer of the nation!
Well did he use his scythe and broom!
And now, with glee, upon thy tomb
I'll pour a suitable libation.*

In *Greece* (this gives me room to say)†
Their vessels, made of brads or clay,
Seem'd sketch'd by some great masters' pencils;
Each ornament in proper place,
Their very Jordans boast a grace ---
How much unlike our vile utensils!

For, now-a-days, each jug and beaker ---
Made for whatever kind of liquor,
Out of all sorts of stuff --- are plann'd ill;
You'll see from our dull workmen (rot 'em!)
No unison 'twixt top and bottom,
No harmony 'twixt spout and handle.

* *Vide Vignette.*

† If this little Episode, and the introduction of my *modern vase*, should appear not sufficiently connected with the principal subject, I hope the ancient Nipperkin in *THE LANDSCAPE* will shelter it from the peltings of the Critics. The subject itself certainly requires no apology, the same image having been lately employed in a great Assembly with so much *sublimity* and *beauty*.

Old *Grecian* forms obtain applause:

Pray, now compare this modern vase ---*

So lumpy, round, without expression!

Is it not like a clump, a knoll or

Some swell just press'd by pond'rous roller? ---

I now return from my digression.

Nature, I own a mother kind,

Yet to her faults I am not blind;

In her long work sometimes she dozes;

To make spruce firs, how strange the whim,†

The upright larch, and poplar trim!

In these her skill she much exposes.

Since the good dame thought fit to fend 'em,

We must do all we can to mend 'em,

* *Vide Vignette.*

† " O Harmony, once more from Heav'n descend!

" Mould the stiff lines, and the harsh colours blend;

" Banish the formal fir's unsocial shade,

" And crop th' aspiring larch's saucy head."

LANDSCAPE, p. 54.

Again, — " Something is more requir'd than size and height,

" Which, shewn in shapes, thus formal, thin, and tall,

" Make us regret they ever grew at all."

LANDSCAPE, p. 62.

And make their stiff, hard outlines fainter;
Good hits by cropping, browfing, breaking,
Perhaps we stand some chance of making,
As with his sponge the old *Greek* painter.

PAYNE blusters for the Rights of Man ;
Of Woman, on the same bold plan,
The fair Miss WOOLSTONCROFT does prattle:
I trust your patience to be heard,
Whilst softly *I* put in a word
In favour of the Rights of *Cattle*.

To mould the fir, of form so starch,
To crop th' aspiring, faucy larch,
O men of clump, ye greatly need 'em ;
For this, O let 'em not be found
In durance vile, yclep'd a pound :
They'll give you grace, O give them freedom.

Much, too, the free-born Muse bewails
Those curs'd despotic things call'd pales,

Which bar these commoners from browfing:
 Ye ruftic Nymphs! hedge-breaking lasses!*
 Oh! tear 'em up---drive horfes, affes,
 Pigs, goats, fheep, oxen, calves and cows in.

Curfe on the fhrubbery's dull round! †
 This then, good folks, is *pleafure ground*!
 To *Bedlam* rather let me travel,
 Than here in endless windings view
 Difcordant tints of glaring hue,
 And walk tormented by the gravel!

- * " But ah! how diff'rent is the formal lump
- " Which the improver plants and calls a clump!
- " Break, break, ye nymphs, the fence that guards it round!
- " With browfing cattle, all its forms confound!"

LANDSCAPE, p. 25.

- † " Curfe on the fhrubbery's infipid fcenes!
- " Of tawdry fringe encircling vapid greens!
- • • • •
- " Tir'd, I ask, *Why this eternal round?*
- " And the pert gard'ner fays, '*Tis pleafure ground.*
- " *This pleafure ground!* astonish'd I exclaim,
- " *To me Moorfields as well deferves the name;*
- " Nay better."—

LANDSCAPE, p. 63.

O how I wish that Madam Nature
 Would take a hint from great SALVATOR;*
 How shocking are her tawdry greens!
 Trees without fytem, clafs, or genus,
 As well would ornament and fcreen us ---
 Her works would *then* be like POUSSIN's!

Yet fome (I think not over wife)‡
 The miniatures of Nature prize.
 Such will her fmalleft volumes read;
 On ftamina and pointals pore,
 And in the flowrets difk explore
 The labours of the patient *Swede*.†

From all the vegetable reign
 They cull bright FLORA's blufhing train;

* In a note of THE LANDSCAPE, p. 60, it is obferved that SALVATOR ROSA never aims at variety, but contents himfelf with one fort of tree only; and we are afterwards told that NIC. POUSSIN's trees are ftill more generalized—he never condefcending to mark the diftinctive characters of any individual fpecies.

‡ Query, Is not this the reafon why Botanifts were formerly called *Simplers*?

† LINNÆUS.

'Midst sober green the glowing tints they spread;
Sweet Nature's form they then believe
More fair, and fondly think they weave
A graceful chaplet round her head.

Hence with such baubles --- now I swear*
That flaunting FLORA's gaudy glare
May charm the dull *Chinese* or *Hindoo*;
But here the jade is only fit,
'Midst smoaky streets, to please a cit
In bowpots at the cockney's window.

* " But better are these gaudy scenes display'd
" From the high terrace or rich balustrade;
" 'Midst sculptur'd founts and vases, that diffuse,
" In shapes fantastic, their concordant hues;
" Than on the swelling slopes of waving ground,
" Which now the solitary house furround."

THUS, doughty KNIGHT, from thy rich theme
 I hope I've nicely skimm'd the cream;
 (I'm a mere literary scrub :)
 What a rare dish for *cognoscenti* !
 So, Sirs, I'll venture to present ye
 With a whipt syllabub.

Now peering with prophetic eye,
 I see BROWN's thread-bare genius fly.---
 Like tail-burnt dog, he seeks his den !
 Rollers are funk, scythes break, clumps fall,*
 REPTON *and Co.* shall, one and all,
 Cry, " Chaos comes again !"

Triumphant KNIGHT ! to give thy name
 A passport to immortal fame,

* According to the spirited apostrophe of the Poet—

—— " Ye rural nymphs, oppose
 " Nature's and Art's confederated foes !
 " Break their fell scythes that would these beauties shave,
 " And sink their iron rollers in the wave !"

What shall the grateful world agree on?
Britain in store has peerage, pension;
France might give "honourable mention,"
 Or send thy bones to her *Pantbeon*.

Let *France* be-praise her *Sans Culottes* ---
 For gain let Statesmen strain their throats,
 Keep Coronets for empty noddles ---
 Such modern gewgaws we despise,
 To *Greece* we turn our classic eyes---
Greece, Greece presents the best of models!

Are not thy well-earn'd glories vaster
 Than those of *Theseus, Pollux, Castor*---
Herculean labours yield to thine.
 Then, if the world my voice will lift to,
 Each avenue, parterre, and vifo,
 Shall shew thy honours all divine,

Thy statue of Colossal size,
 In ductile yew, shall nobly rise ---

(Think not thy modesty shall 'scape us)*
 The *God of Gardens* thou shalt stand,
 To fright improvers from the land,†
 A huge and terrible *Priapus*.

* This alludes to the delicacy, or *mauvaise honte*, as the *French* would call it, of a late celebrated character, which prevented his friends from erecting a statue to his honour in St. George's Fields.

† ——— “ *Deus inde ego furum—*

“ *Maxima formido.*”—

HORACE, Sat. 8. lib. 1.

Such being a principal part of the office assigned to the *God of Gardens*, the Author of *THE LANDSCAPE* will allow *fures* to be translated *improvers*; and, it is thought, he can have no objection to the proposed apotheosis.



POSTSCRIPT.

IF a word in sober sadness may be permitted to close a long train of sportive irony, let it express a wish that no part of this *jeu d'esprit* may give serious offence to a writer, whose learning always merits respect, and whose taste often claims approbation. Nevertheless, very few, probably, will be convinced, by his Poetry, that the old style of laying out grounds was "negatively good."

Those who think, on the contrary, that it was *positively bad*; who look up with reverence to the memory of BROWN, as the great destroyer of an unnatural and absurd system, will feel with indignation an injury offered to his ashes. This sentiment produced the present hasty SKETCH---

— In celeres Iambos
Misi furem.

It is a hard fate that early reformers meet with in these times; the destroyers of yew-tree giants in *England*, like those who first overthrew tyranny in *France*, are equally *denounced* by their more daring successors.

The living professors of the art are able to fight their own battles: to *them* it is a very *serious* warfare; for should the doctrines of THE LANDSCAPE become prevalent, they may borrow another exclamation from *Othello*, and with great truth cry out that their

“ Occupation’s gone!”

SINCE the preceding pages were written, Mr. PRICE’s Essay has been published. It is so intimately connected with my subject, that I cannot resist the temptation of adding a few observations upon it.

I am ready to acknowledge, that this Gentleman has marked out the limits of the *Picturesque* and *Beautiful* with as much precision as the nature of that *debateable ground* seems to admit; his manner of doing it, cannot be better characterized than in his own language. He is “full of unexpected turns, of flashes of light: objects “ the most familiar are placed by him in such singular, “ yet natural points of view,---he strikes out such un- “ thought-of agreements and contrasts --- such combi-

“ nations so little obvious, yet never forced or affected,
 “ that the attention cannot flag; but, from the delight
 “ of what is passed, we eagerly listen for what is to
 “ come.” Such an assailant is truly formidable. But
 if it was reserved for him to lay down better precepts;
 if he is the first who has properly invoked the rural
 Graces *solutis zonis*, why should poor BROWN, who made
 way for them by the destruction of the formal and the
 ugly, meet with such harsh, such very severe criticism?
 Would it not be more just, as well as candid, to detect his
 errors, but at the same time give him his due share of
 praise? The whole list of crimes committed by this
 great culprit in the regions of taste, and for which he
 is now impeached at the bar of the public, may be com-
 prized in one article, viz. that he made the Beautiful his
 sole aim, without sufficiently attending to the Pic-
 turesque. If his merits should not be thought a com-
 plete *set off*, to balance this defect, I would shortly urge
 in his defence, that the higher style of the Picturesque
 is not much in the power of the Improver. For example,
 the landscapes of RUBENS are admired in the Essay for
 being full of the picturesque accidents of Nature; among
 these, the most striking are, “ the effects of thunder and
 “ lightning, torrents rolling down, trees torn up by the
 “ roots, and the dead bodies of men and animals.” Mr. P.
 has given a pleasant caricature of an Improver working

upon a picture of CLAUDE. A picturesque Imitator of RUBENS, attempting to transfer these accompaniments from the canvass to Nature, might be sketched by way of companion, with features no less ridiculous. In gardening, I conceive, we must only hope for the picturesque in the wilder parts of the scene; and here Art must tread

“ With unsandal'd foot,
“ Printless, as though the place were holy ground.”

It is the *Beautiful*, which is more within the reach of the Improver. This is surely to be found in the undulating play of smooth verdure, in the contrast of different trees happily disposed, and in the endless variety of foliage and flowers of humbler growth. All these circumstances are charming in reality, though they may not furnish good subjects for the pencil. The fastidious eye, which turns from such a scene with disgust, because there is no temptation to take out the sketch-book, is, I think, not much to be envied. Hollow lanes, “ruts and rubbish,” burdock and thistles, produce a very pleasing effect in their proper places; an exuberant beard is also a most picturesque ornament to the human countenance; but *shaven* turf and “prim gravel walks,” like a smooth chin, are sacrifices to *the comfortable* (a principle not totally to be forgotten in laying out grounds,) which, I apprehend, cannot well be avoided; and even these, if

Mr. P.'s remarks with regard to avoiding monotony be attended to, are in themselves by no means destitute of beauty.

Let me conclude my "*profing*" by asking, why are the purchasers of "ready-made taste" to be treated so contemptuously? If all "whom Heaven has blessed with affluence," (according to the newspaper phrase) were also endowed with Mr. P.'s genius, the flop-shops of *Capability* might perhaps as well be shut up. Yet even here the experienced Artist might sometimes be consulted with advantage. But are there no wealthy characters, who, having for the best part of their days been

" In populous cities pent,"

retire from their shops and counting-houses, to some newly purchased estate in the country, *stung* by the raging love of improving? May we not find here and there a fox-hunting 'Squire, with no very accurate ideas of the picturesque and beautiful, who is at the same time *goaded* on by the desire of imitating his more tasteful neighbours? In these cases, and some others, I am inclined to think, that "ready-made taste" is a great public benefit. Although, like "ready-made love," it may not give the purchaser such genuine pleasure, as where the finer feelings of the soul are called into action, yet it must surely be infinitely preferable to the *unnatural extravagances* these desperate amateurs might be reduced

to, without the aid of this *Venus parabilis* to give their passion a proper direction.

Let the Art, then, continue to be cultivated, and encouraged by the Public *as a profession*; let those favoured minds, who, like Mr. P. feel themselves capable of instructing the Artists themselves, candidly impart their ideas; but let them not hold up to ridicule an employment, which appears to be the only means of diffusing wide the blessing of rural beauty,

“ Till Albion smile

“ One ample theatre of sylvan grace.”